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in symbolism, in allegory teaching some virtue or moral, in pretty poetic fancy, a reminder of some historical heroism held up as an example, or some historical iniquity held up as a warning. This Orientalism has a serene contempt for in-

dividualism, and cares mainly for the types, the big main elements, the fundamental principles. To understand Japanese art fully we must first gain some understanding of the Japanese mind and be in sympathetic accord.



THE ALBRECHT'S FOUNTAIN—VIENNA.

AN EXAMPLE OF MUNICIPAL ART.

MUNICIPAL ART.

By WM. LAUREL HARRIS.

NATIONAL CAPITOLS AND HALLS OF LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

When States or nations are firmly established their legislative halls or capitols always assume a monumental character.

In time past it has never been sufficient that these buildings should simply answer the bare utilitarian needs of the government, but they have always been designed as works of art.

And it is in decorating great public buildings that the greatest schools of painting have been developed. Under the absolute monarchies and paternal governments of remote antiquity, kings and emperors built gorgeous governmental palaces, glorifying thereby their executive power.

When the lawmaking was in the hands of high ecclesiastics, vast buildings arose, half religious, half civil, that answered the needs of the people. And under the republican form of government, the public buildings were no less stately and no less worthy of the people's pride. All these various forms of national capitols were richly decorated.

The great buildings of India, Asia Minor, Egypt, Persia and even in the remote countries of the Far East, have been covered

with mural painting, both on the interior and upon the exterior. And the classic buildings known as Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Etruscan and Roman were all splendid in the richness of their color decorations. Nor was all this ornamentation an aimless struggle for rich effects. It was a national endeavor to express in fitting form the hopes and ideals of the people.

Leaving the classic period, we find that our immediate ancestors in the countries of northern and western Europe employed gold and color on their government buildings with rare discretion and marvellous splendor.

There have been, however, two periods when color decorations were somewhat neglected, when the governments failed to call upon the mural painters for great compositions embodying the national ideals in pictorial form.

The first of these two periods was in Imperial Rome, when splendid effects were obtained by the juxtaposition of different colored marbles.

But this taste for sumptuous halls and gorgeous apartments soon degenerated into mere show.

The public, then no longer seeing in the government build-

ings symbols of noble patriotism, felt that these buildings had become monuments of arbitrary power and unjustly accumulated wealth. Then amid wars and tumults rendered fatal by the corruption of her government and the revolts of her citizens, Rome fell.

The next period when color was neglected and patriotism failed to find a proper expression in mural painting was during the late Renaissance.

And many governments of the late Renaissance fell because of popular revolts among the people.

The citizens revolted against an aristocracy whose pride and vanity were reflected in the meaningless ornamentation of public buildings.

Fortunately in our own time there has been a revival of civic pride and national thought as expressed in mural painting.

Notable examples of this revival are the majestic compositions in the Chamber of Deputies at Rome. In our own country we have seen a certain decorative effort in the Capitol at Washington, but this effort in no way corresponds to a popular idea. It represents an alien art applied to a national building by an alien hand.

We have, however, the Boston State House, with its beautiful pictures by Walker, Simmons and Reid. And the Minnesota State Capitol, now in course of construction, will have some of the most remarkable decorations painted in modern times.

It can be safely said that this series of panels by John La Farge, H. O. Walker, C. Y. Turner and Edwin H. Blashfield will mark an epoch in American art.

If space permitted it would be very interesting to compare the relative cost of different State capitols; for it has been demonstrated that the most beautiful buildings do not always cost the most money.

TOWN HALLS.

The subject of Town Halls is a subject that has always seemed especially dear to the heart of the people. The history of decoration in Town Halls begins with the history of municipal organization. On these civic buildings the artists of antiquity lavished their most splendid efforts.

And many, many priceless works of art painted in the middle ages would still be in existence, had the cause of liberty always triumphed.

But the first violent acts of angry tyrants were usually directed against the people's building, which was the Town Hall.

We can still admire the beauty of Gothic art in such buildings as the Rathhaus at Brunswick, Dantzic, Munster and Ratisbonne.

There was once a Gothic Hotel de Ville of artistic excellence in every French city. But so fiercely did the French aristocracy wage war on the civic ambitions of the people that to-day only one of all these town halls remains, dating from before the sixteenth century.

This is the quaint little Hotel de Ville at Saint Antonin. This quaint old structure, built in the twelfth century, was most elaborately decorated with mural paintings, setting forth the civic pride and the religious fervor of the people.

In our own time, with the revival of civic pride, there has come a revival of civic art. It is in the town halls of Paris, Berlin, Antwerp and Brussels that we see the most important modern efforts in the art of decoration.

But in our own country civic virtue receives little aid or encouragement from artistic sources. The "finishing up" of our city halls is in the hands of politicians and unscrupulous contractors.

Large contracts for expensive marble finishings are the rule. And if the decoration of city halls means anything to the average citizen it means a somewhat dubious but very lucrative contract.

COURT HOUSES.

The desire of all governments has been to maintain the majesty of the law. All successful governments from the time of the Egyptian and Babylonian kings to our own day have endeavored to teach the people something more than the great force and terrible penalties of the law. We are told by Hindoo legends that the throne of Solomon was wonderfully decorated with figures that articulated words of wisdom, teaching the people the thirty-two virtues necessary for their salvation.

Whatever we may think of this Hindoo legend the story indicates the function of mural painting in halls of justice.

Throughout the Middle Ages and well on into the Renaissance mural painters were always called upon to decorate the court rooms with vast compositions setting forth the fundamental ideas of truth and justice.

And in modern times many beautiful decorations have been placed in court houses, though not often in the chamber of justice.

In the law courts of Paris, Brussels and Berlin are notable examples of what has been painted in our own time.

In New York we have the imposing compositions by Simmons placed in the Criminal Court Building by the Municipal Art Society. The beautiful pictures in the Appellate Court are charming in detail and harmonious in general effect. Another very important example of mural painting in America is the series of decorations in the Baltimore Court House.

Here the talents of several distinguished artists are utilized to set before the people of Maryland vital facts in the early history of the State. But one of the chief obstacles in the decoration of modern court houses is the lack of a comprehensive plan at the very beginning.

Too often pictures have been done in haste and applied like some sort of new-fangled wall paper.

During the glorious periods of municipal art each picture was painted with a definite object. The man who planned the rooms had firm convictions and realized the teaching power of art. So a color scheme was carefully formulated and the wainscoting, the rugs, the railings and all purely utilitarian things were kept subordinate to the dominant idea in the artist's mind.

And the more one studies the history of civic art the more one appreciates the teaching power of monumental decorative compositions and the necessity of taking such things into consideration at the very inception of a building.

HALLS OF RECORD.

A nation that forgets its past is a nation without a future.

Those nations for whose institutions we have the most profound respect are those nations whose people guard with jealous care the history and traditions of their forefathers.

What more fitting way could be found of commemorating our past than in the decoration of our Hall of Records.

And yet it is not done. All the artistic societies of New York combined in an endeavor to have a proper scheme of decoration adopted when our city fathers were building our present Hall of Records.

But their efforts were useless, for the marble contractor had fixed his contract from the beginning.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.

From remote Antiquity centers of learning have also been centers of artistic activity.

Some of the greatest artistic triumphs of England were at Oxford and Cambridge.

All the great schools in the Middle Ages were rendered beautiful by the work of the most famous painters and sculptors then living.

In modern times some of the most remarkable mural decorations have been placed in the schools and colleges of Paris.

From among the many masterpieces it is well to note the works of Puvis de Chavannes, P. V. Galland, Chartran, Francois Flamman and Besnard, placed not long since in the Sorbonne.

Another very remarkable decorative scheme is in the School of Pharmacy.

Here a series of compositions by Besnard lift what is ordinarily termed the drug trade to the lofty position of a Heaven-inspired profession.

Beginning with prehistoric times, Besnard shows how the preparations of medicine were slowly perfected.

He shows how surgery was revolutionized by the invention of antiseptics, and finally shows us the modern man and woman cared for in a thousand ways through the profession of Pharmacy. So in the decoration of our schools and colleges many important events can well be commemorated, events that are hardly suitable for City Halls or Court Houses.

The noble actions of private citizens would thus be placed before the rising generation as a reminder of the full duties of man to his fellow man. Each profession and trade could be dignified till each citizen would feel that he had his mission in the world.

HOSPITALS.

While the beginning of mural decoration in capitols, town halls, court houses and other public buildings, easily dates back to the most remote periods of antiquity, the decoration of hospitals is of comparatively modern origin.

The earliest hospital on record is that described by St. Jerome as having been founded in the year 380 by a Roman lady named Fabiola. But this hospital was under private management. It was not until the beginning of the 11th Century that city hospitals became general. The decoration of these municipal hospitals immediately became a work of great importance. Very little now remains of the mural paintings, as all the hospitals were very much neglected during the wars that followed the Reformation. Many small pictures and colored bas reliefs torn from the walls of hospitals may still be seen in various art galleries of Europe. However, from old books we can learn what general schemes of color were used in the plain and ornamental painting, and what subjects were selected for the composition in the large decorative pictures. From the architectural remains of such buildings as the hospital at Angers, Chartres, Soissons, Tonnerre and Beaune, we can form a good idea of mural decorations in Gothic hospitals.

It is evident that they anticipated our modern discoveries in physiology.

For the builders of these early hospitals endeavored to place the patients in surroundings that would tend to create cheerful thoughts. The patients were given ideas that would strengthen them in the midst of suffering.

In modern hospitals the objects of such decorations as there are seems quite different from the mural paintings executed before the beginning of the 17th Century.

Nowadays, the decoration is all at the front door or near at hand so as to impress the casual visitor with an idea of wealth.

This may be very well in its way, but it does little good to the suffering humanity in the wards of our city hospitals.

THE CITY LIBRARY.

Before the days of printing, the opportunities for decorating libraries were indeed very limited. Libraries had always consisted in collections of manuscripts or tablets laboriously written and gathered together at a vast expense.

These rare collections could be housed in comparatively small rooms.

However, such opportunities for mural paintings as did exist were utilized in the most beautiful manner.

A good example of this form of Art is still to be seen at Sienna.

To-day the decorations in this library are of priceless value and form one of the city's chief assets, attracting as they do hundreds and hundreds of tourists.

Yet the original cost of these paintings was not great when compared with the ordinary expenses of a municipality.

Since the invention of modern printing presses, the size of our city libraries has increased prodigiously. And librarians still feel that they are short of wall space for shelves when they see themselves confronted with the tremendous output of our modern printing houses.

The danger now is that the library as a public monument, embodying noble and patriotic thoughts, may disappear in its endeavor to house an enormous quantity of books.

And in its place the citizens may see a vast building which is little better than a storehouse.

But very fortunate exceptions to this purely utilitarian tendency may be pointed out.

The Congressional Library at Washington is one of the most colossal decorative undertakings in modern times.

The mere magnitude of the work makes it impossible in this restricted publication to do anything more than mention a few names.

But the works of such men as Blashfield, Vedder, Cox, Maynard, Melchers, McEwen, Benson, and many others, are so well known, and have been so generally admired, that an elaborate description is not necessary.

The Boston Public Library is another monumental building elaborately decorated and well calculated to stimulate civic pride in Massachusetts.

New York, the wealthiest city in America, is unfortunately unable to decorate its libraries, although we hope for great things in the new Public Library now being built on Fifth avenue and 42nd street.

Small towns, however, may sometimes possess very successful memorials of their civic history and civic pride.

A good example of this is the recently completed library at Watertown, N. Y. On the walls of this beautiful building are depicted scenes from the local history of Watertown beginning with the earliest French settlements and continuing down to our own day.

CONCLUSION.

There are, of course, many kinds of public and semi-public buildings not mentioned in this paper whose walls demand a suitable color treatment.

In Europe many railroad stations are beautifully decorated with landscapes showing notable scenes through which the railroads pass.

Good examples of this form of art may be admired at the Gare de Lyon in Paris.

Then, too, the cities of Europe have public markets beautifully decorated and calculated to awaken civic pride in the breast of the dullest citizen.

Of these splendid market buildings a notable example is that very successful modern structure, Les Halls Central, in Paris, of which the decorations will soon be in place.

The practice of placing decorative monuments and mural paintings in public markets dates back to remote antiquity.

The earliest example of such mural paintings now in existence were executed during the 12th Century for the ancient city of Saint Antonin.

Having been somewhat exposed to the weather they are now unfortunately in a very dilapidated condition. But they

still suggest the noble ideas that called these pictures into existence.

From one cause and another the public markets have suffered more than almost any of the old public buildings that give such a charm to the cities of Europe; and it is a fact much to be regretted when we consider the tendency of this present age of commerce.

Another form of public building that has almost entirely disappeared was the public eating place for poor people. These soup kitchens were usually connected with a public lodging house. This form of building was usually decorated with mural paintings illustrating the story of the Prodigal Son.

It was intended by these pictures to not only render the public eating places and lodging houses beautiful, but to inspire the slipshod wanderers of the streets with a sense of virtue.

In closing this short account of the past and present status of decoration in public buildings, we wish to direct especial attention to the necessity of a comprehensive scheme in decorative work.

A suitable plan should be at hand, the very inception of a public building.

It has always been almost impossible to force mural painting into an architectural design already completed. There are, of course, artistic difficulties to be encountered, but by far the most difficult thing is to overcome the resistance of the contractors who make hard and fast business agreements at the very beginning.

It is now necessary to oppose reason to the absurd fancies of some people, and to the incompetent authority of others.

So this appeal for a National Art in our public buildings is directed to every loyal American citizen. The demands of our artists are based on time-honored precedent and on sound common sense.

We do not set forth these ideas for the profit of this or that artist or group of artists. But it is our wish to see our public buildings inspired, as it were, with the noble spirit of American patriotism.

Mr. J. H. Strauss, the Fifth avenue dealer, has returned from abroad with an attractive supply of paintings, principally from the French school, which are displayed in his new gallery at No. 285 to great advantage. Notable among these new importations is an example from the brush of Leon Richet, showing a cottage, nestling in strongly painted landscape, with a Millet-like little figure sitting by the roadside. It is an exceptional canvas, with rich tones and beautiful cloud composition. A painting by Georges Laugée shows a woman walking along the road to bring refreshments to the harvesters beyond. This is painted with the elusive, atmospheric effects we find in the work of Bastien-Lepage, in a harmonious key. Some examples of Doulouard's Cavaliers show the foundation of this young French artist's present popularity.

The new Strauss Galleries have been well arranged, the furthestmost being especially well-adapted for the display of the well-selected paintings carried in stock.

* * *

Director Kurtz, of the Albright Gallery, made a find recently in rummaging over the old rubbish stored in the former quarters of the Buffalo Academy by discovering a painting which in 1872 had been bought for the Academy for \$10,000. It was coated with soot so that the figures on the canvas were indistinguishable. After being cleaned it proved to be a scene in Paris during the revolution in 1848, and painted by Philip-poteaux. It is 20 feet long by 10 high, and contains 300 figures, many of which are portraits of historical characters.

THE "WASHINGTON EVENING STAR" MURAL DECORATIONS.

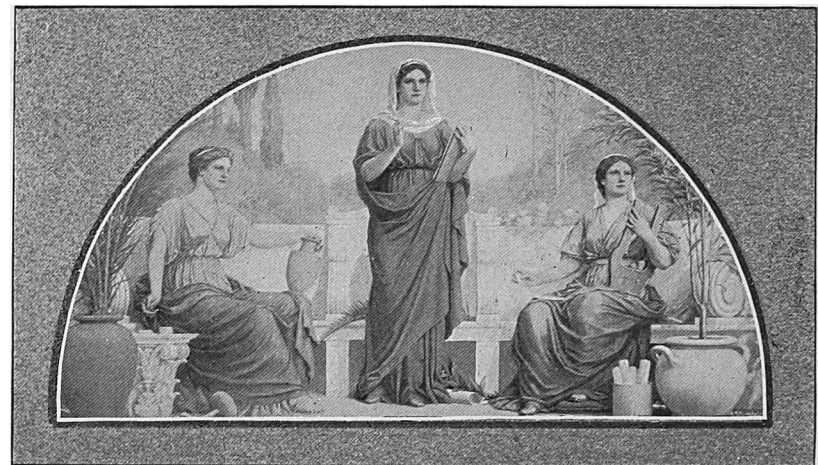
To illustrate the points made in the article by Mr. Wm. L. Harris on Municipal Art, it is timely to call attention to the mural decorations recently placed in the business office of the new building erected by *The Evening Star* in Washington, D. C. These consist of seven lunettes, furnishing the frieze for the walls of that semi-public place. They were painted by Mr. Frederic Dielman, the President of the National Academy of Design, and appropriately represent "the component elements of the newspaper." They are well thought out, of excellent color and draughtsmanship, and among the best productions of this well-known artist. The lunettes cover the following subjects:



NEWS GATHERING.

("LOOK AROUND THE HABITABLE WORLD."—*Juvenal*.)

The genius of intelligence stands on a high tower or terrace, scanning the horizon to see what is transpiring, the seated figure holding her spy glass. The smaller figure on the left, with the telegraphic instrument, symbolizes the present method of transmitting intelligence; the old method is indicated by the figure on the right, setting free the carrier pigeon. On one side in the distance a peaceful landscape is shown; on the other a heavy smoke rises, indicating war or disaster.



ARTS, HISTORY, LITERATURE.

(THE DAY'S RECORD.)

The female figure on the left typifies Art, with attributes of painting, sculpture, architecture, etc. In the center stands the figure of History, recording events. That on the right, with MSS. scroll and lyre, symbolizes Literature, Romance, etc., representing the miscellaneous reading matter of the paper.